

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

Our current corporate-dominated communication industry is fulfilling it's duty to it's shareholders, but is failing in it's duty to the citizens of this country. These media channels are allowed to borrow our public airwaves for their own purposes, but they are no longer held accountable to the uses of these public resources. It is time to demand that our publicly held property is used to benefit the public - not just a few corporate owners.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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